

Remarks

Claims 1 and 7-24 are pending in the application. Claims 19-24 are new.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1 and 7-17 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Specifically, the Examiner objected to the "mutually engaging threads" language of claim 1. The presently amended claims do not contain the "mutually engaging threads" language. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1 and 7-18 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No 5,980,212 ("Smith"). Smith discloses an oilfield tubular threaded connection with high torque transmission capability. In particular, the invention disclosed in Smith is directed to maximizing the torsional strength of a threaded connection for a downhole tubular. Smith discloses a drilling string, which in normal use must be capable of withstanding high torsional loads. In contrast, the present invention discloses a connector which provides for improved transfer of bending loads across adjacent tubulars. More specifically, the present invention is directed to a connector for connecting together tubulars of a riser. A riser extends between the well-head on the seabed to surface level and is therefore not considered to be a downhole tubular. Additionally, a riser is not subject to large torsional loads such as those described in Smith. Instead, a riser is conventionally subject to substantial lateral forces, which would not occur downhole. Following from this, Smith discloses a specific tubular connection for solving or mitigating the problem of maintaining the integrity of downhole tubing strings subject to large torsional loads. The present invention, on the other hand, is not primarily concerned with torsional loading. Instead, the present invention discloses a riser connector for connecting first and second tubulars of a riser and which solves or mitigates the problem of maintaining structural integrity in light of large bending loads which risers are susceptible to.

To differentiate how Smith does not anticipate the present invention, Applicant has amended the claims to explicitly relate to a "riser connector" for connecting first and second tubulars "of a riser". Applicant has submitted new dependent claims 19-24, which depend from independent claim 1. Claims 19-24 are directed to the same subject matter as previously canceled claims 2-6. Claim 22 was not previously submitted, but is directed to the bending forces disclosed throughout the specification, *e.g.*, pp. 10-11. Thus, no new matter has been introduced. In order for Smith to anticipate, the "identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the ... claim." *Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co.*, 868 F.2d

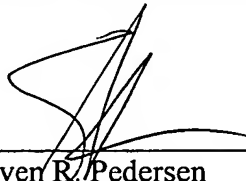
1226, 1236, 9 USPQ2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989). Smith only discloses a downhole oilfield tubular threaded connection. Smith does not disclose a riser connector. Therefore, Smith does not anticipate the presently claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims remaining in the application are now in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner require any further clarification, or feel that a telephonic interview may expedite prosecution, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below. In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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